

My name is Joe Shea, I live at 57 Maple St, Apartment 415, here in Burlington, VT

(Wharf Lane)

**What do you think about when you think about home and the idea of home? The sense of home?**

I think this is a nice apartment, a nice building. This is kind of my home, I've been here for almost two years. Its nice.

I've lived in a lot of different states. I like Vermont, I like the community feeling, the size of Vermont, the environment around here is very nice. The weather is excellent, even though you have cold hands.

I think Vermont is a nicer place than some of the states I've lived in. There are nice places I've lived, but this is a real all over, generally nice place. And there are some nice people in Vermont.

**What things stand out to you that set Vermont apart from other places that you've lived?**

I really like the change of the weather. I love this lake. this is a great natural resource. On the other side we've got the mountains if you like to ski. There's really good golf in the state. Real good golf.

**Back to things you experience when you feel like you're at home**

This is really nice because you have to be buzzed into this building, so there aren't people just walking up and knocking on your door. You usually know if somebody's coming, which I like. You don't have somebody coming trying to sell you magazines. I gotta find the Girl Scout cookies though.

**So a little bit of privacy and security?**

Yep. And it's quaint, cleanliness. Down here in southern Burlington it's a nice area to walk around. You get the waterfront. Go over there in the summertime and there's a lot of live music. At different times, different days. I like the live music aspect of it. There's a lot of walking either way you go, you get the bike path from the south or north. Long walks. Used to go there and find a bench and sit and watch life go by and it's relaxing.

**So you make a lot of use of the green spaces?**

Yeah

**Do you get down through the Pine Street corridor at all?**

I drive down Pine Street on a regular basis. There's a couple things I do...If you see the banana boxes over there, I go from Hannaford Brothers North and the Hannaford right behind Kmart, and there Hannafords on Dorset. Those three Hannafords on Saturday and Sunday at 7 o'clock, we make the run, when they're getting out the day old stuff for the food shelf. They used to take

it and dump it in the dumpsters. The guy I'm doing it with Dick, he brings it up to his house and sets it out under his carport and he's got neighbors and people who need groceries come over and get their own day old stuff. Its good fold, real good food. I do that every weekend and Holidays. If the food shelf is closed, it will back up at the stores and go in the dumpster. So we go pick it up and bring it around. There's a lot of people that if it wasn't for that their food and their food budgets would be really wiped out.

**How many people on average?**

I'm going to say 75 every Saturday and Sunday. Some people come one day or the other. We can't guarantee we're gonna have hamburger rolls there on a Saturday, but on Sunday we might have a whole bunch. We never can tell what's gonna be there, so you gotta kinda go and see what's there and get what you need. Its not a go in and fill a whole box up with one thing and take off with it. Just take what you need. You need a couple oranges? You're only gonna go through a couple oranges. Just take a couple oranges. Instead of taking a whole bag and letting half the bag go rotten in the fridge at your place, take 3 or 4 oranges out of the bag, and leave the rest for somebody else so they can get through the week. Have a couple oranges or apple or bananas. If everybody shares, it stretches everybody's food budget.

**So you have a car?**

I have a pick-up truck so I can haul that stuff around. But I only drive on Saturday and Sunday pretty much. Maybe once or twice during the week, but I drove enough of my days.

I either walk or watch movies, listen to good music. I try not to drive that much. Gasoline is coming down, but I'm tired of puttin' it in the truck. I'd rather keep the little bit of cash I have and put it in my pocket.

**What would make travel easier for you?**

The bus system here is pretty good for a non grid city. You can get within a couple blocks of wherever you're going. If you go out to anywhere in the hospital district. It is a big district, they go from way down there on Tilley lane to up on top of the hill to the hospital. So its a big, large area. So if you can get around on the buses which is really good, it helps anybody that needs to. I guess that I'm going there when we're done with this thing. I gotta go to Tilley Lane for the cardiologist.

I'll be driving there today because I've got two other things I need to do. I've compressed them into one time, so I go there, make the two stops, then come back here.

Cuts down on the mileage, cuts down on the gasoline. Plus, driving around...I'm 60 now, driving around isn't as fun as it used to be.

[Conversation about football and where interviewers are from]

**So you're retired I assume? Or are you still working?**

No, I've had two strokes and one and a half heart attacks. That's why I'm going over to the cardiac unit over here at 2:15.

**Are there things about living in the community that could make your life easier?**

A lot of things set up...I'm a young retired person because of my strokes. I'd much rather be working right now but I can't. There's a lot of different things to keep you kind of active and busy, especially as you get older. Here they've got things...the whole complex here, they've got movies you can see, they go out in the summer, go out to Shelburne farms and stuff like that, as a group. They do a lot of things so you can keep yourself pretty much active. You're not here, you're not stuck right here. It's also nice to get out, sit outside and get some sun. Walk. Walk over here on the piers and sit out and enjoy the outside. There's some beautiful days here in Vermont. A few. Not too many, but a few.

**What about parks, playgrounds, community spaces around here...Do you feel like there's enough of those?**

Personally, I'm not gonna go to a playground. There are some nice ones around here, they could always be grown a little bit. One thing I haven't seen is where a group has gone in and just built a nice playground for kids. I've seen them doing this on This Old House on TV...A group will go into the area for one, two days, build a whole nice playground. The kids enjoy it big time. I think that's something that's really important. I think that we need to have things for kids to get outside, get that air. Get out there for an hour, hour a day, just playing, chasing running around, riding their bicycles to and from. There's a lot of people that need to be very aware of the kids around them that do ride their bicycles. Kids should be taught to stay in the bike lanes or stay up on the sidewalks so that they're safe. Because there's been a lot of times...myself, right down here on Pine Street, where somebody's going down, they're riding down and they come by a rough piece in the road and they swerve around and go right in front of you and you go "whoa!" I don't want to hit anybody, I don't want nobody to get hurt. But at the same time, I'm not gonna drive into the other lane and wipe out the guy that's heading the other way.

I think that some of the bicyclists are getting more respectful, as the drivers...I think I see getting more respectful. As I see going down Pine Street with those flashing lights, I think that's really good. I think...we're going along...you or me...thinking about something else, going down the road and everything else, and that things flashing and you step on the brakes and let the people get across and then continue on. There's nothing wrong with that, at all.

Now the one I really don't like is up here on Pine and Maple, coming up...I enjoy watching Fox at 5 in the afternoon...The Five. Different times I'm coming back, I'll be down the other side of Curtis Lumber and conveniently it's 5 minutes to 5 and I think, well I planned this one bad. You think 5 minutes to get up there, no problem...It'll be 5:28 by the time I get up here. Just so long for that couple blocks, up on Pine Street, on the Maple and into here. It makes you think to plan ahead all the time. Plan ahead, plan ahead.

**Any other kind of neighborhood spots/favorite places you spend time around here and the Pine Street corridor?**

No...I goup to Church Street. Church Streets really good. I can get a full dose for about a week or two of people watching. Go up there and finding a bench, and just sit and witch people. 'Cause there can be a lot of kinds of crazy things going on in their life, going this way or that way.

**Would people benefit from more corner stores, restaurants, etc?**

You got Handy's Lunch over here. And the little place to get coffee...Maglianero's. I've gone in there a couple different times. Just sit in there and look at the art and drink a cup of coffee. And then you get done, walk away, kill some time type of thing. They've had some good art in there, some stuff to make you think. Especially when they got a series of pictures, you know, what were they thinking with this whole series here? Sometimes after a while you put it together, but when you first start glancing you think "what were they thinking with this" And then you see a continuity, okay here's some thoughts, ok.

**Anything else you'd like to see in the neighborhood?**

On this side of the building over here, a professional football stadium. It could have soccer, rugby. Could also have a lot of different people performing their music. Festivals where people come down and enjoy food. I'm just kidding, really...

SOME of the things you gotta let the different entrepreneurs come in, set it up, clean up the windows, sweep the street, and so...let them put it in there rather than come in and say "ok, let's do this." Cause I don't believe we should force things down the throats of people. You gotta make sure the people in the area want it, and if they don't like it it won't last. Nothing against them personally, but up here in the corner of Maple and the next one down. There was a small pizza joint that went in there. They were in there for a little while, it looked like they were trying to make a go of it, and all the sudden they were gone. That's the way kinda...You either make it. The neighborhood either loves the pizza, the prices, and they come back and enjoy it. Or they for whatever reason don't, and that's where you kinda gotta be. You can't force everything to happen. The marketplace has gotta be the thing to determine whether people like it or don't like it.

**What things would be useful or not useful for people living here? What about more housing in the Pine Street area?**

You don't need to make a big project area type thing. It's like what the commerce of the city can handle. If they did low rent, then medium. And some people want to have a nicer place, even though they're in the neighborhood...Keep the neighborhood nice and neat. This building here, from what I can see there's all kinds of different incomes of people who live here. A couple ladies live right across the hall. Two of them. They both have jobs they're working. So they're getting out and going everyday. The building is fairly clean. Actually past fairly; it's clean. And the yard, the acreage right around it is kept up and stuff. I can see that this type of thing expanding down the corridor...But the buildings where some of the landlords that have housing in Burlington that aren't putting any money back into the housing...The roof doesn't leak, everything's cool. We don't need those types of landlords down there. We need someone who is gonna keep on with the community type thing. because that's how you build community, is

being responsible. Somebody throws something on the ground, you pick it up and go “hey!” Because I’ve done this a couple times, it’s been quite a few years, but back when I used to drive around and drink beer and somebody would throw a can of beer out the car I’d stop the car I’d get out, get a bag...put at least six cans in that bag, and put it back in the car. I’m not gonna litter. Its one of those things...I don’t run around with it tattooed on me but I don’t like littering. We got too much beautiful acreage all across this country to be littering like that. There’s enough people throwing all kinds of junk...McDonald’s boxes, baby diapers, all kinds of things as they’re driving down the road. You’re not gonna contribute to that sitting next to me, so go pick it up. That’s my lecturing.

**So as long as people are responsible with their housing, it doesn’t seem like having more housing would be a big concern?**

No. The community needs it, ‘cause there’s a housing shortage. One of the guys that helps me does the volunteering with me...His back is all messed up, so he gets a six or seven hundred dollar check from Social Security every month. He has to pay for his child too. But he doesn’t have that much money. You look at six or seven hundred bucks, trying to have an apartment...He needs the help with low income housing and I think for him it’s too bad, he can’t find some place. He’s not a filthy person. He’s clean. His back is bad, but he knows how to not tweak it. He’s somebody who needs some help. To get some lower income housing in a nice area. Keep it clean, keep it looking good.

**What would your vision of the perfect South End be in 5, 10, 15 years?**

One, having I 89 come right up here and hook onto Battery Street, just to move people in and out of town. It would be a lot easier. With that being done, the space on each side of that filled in with housing or retail, whatever. Fill it in. Take a look at it long term. Do we need to go up 2 stories or 6 stories. I know Vermont has a limit...Over here you got Decker Towers, its the highest building in the state of Vermont I believe. Just build according to the locality.

A lot of it is is don’t build if the people aren’t gonna be there. The United States government has put up tons of building that are just empty. Not in Burlington, Vermont, but all over the United States, they got buildings that are just empty. And they just sit there and they’re great and “we’re landlords,” but nobody renting. So I can’t see building in Burlington, Vermont just for building. If you got people who can move into the programs and what not and move in there whether they’re on their own, got their own financing or whatever. But if they need the help, help them get up into a place...

I don’t want it to get overdeveloped, but at the same time for the city, get the road in here and kind of build it from there.

I know that we need building, but just to say “ok, we need buildings so were gonna put in 600, low rent.” No, make sure you’re gonna put them in, make sure everyone can live together...Gradually fill them up.

**What about building businesses?**

I think there would be the economic development of Vermont and the Burlington area that will help different entrepreneurs. I think you can do a lot of different entrepreneur type things. It's kind of hard to have the government run something that...you need an entrepreneur to run a business, and the government, whether it be Vermont or the UNited States, has got a lot of people that work for it, but a lot of people in there aren't in the entrepreneurial mode..They looking at it differently...this is my job...This over here, this is my vision for my business type of thing. There's nothing wrong with either one, but these people need healthcare taken care of, raises and what not. This one over here is going to need a little help getting a place opened up and cash flow and stuff like that and putting it all together. There two different types of people.

Just because you're talking about building new widgets, dont' say, "we're not going to do that." Sit down, listen to me, the new widget is going to be the thing that's gonna work.

Look at the state of Vermont, its known all over the country...it's gotta be the world, for all the craft beer companies. Its something that Vermont...if you can get into Vermont and develop a product just thats Vermont Made...means it means a lot in your in label. There's people all over the world who are gonna buy a Vermont-made product, they don't even know if it's the right color or taste or whatever, but if its Vermont mad, they're gonna try it and say, "hey, that's not bad...Those crazy Vermonters are doing ok."

But I've got a couple that I know just outside of Madison, Wisconsin. He was a beer truck driver, and he just got laid off, and he called me up the other day and was talking about the craft beer thing. I gotta thing over there, a little bag, Vermont Beer Bag and a Vermont Beer t-shirt and a bumper sticker and I'm sending that out to them...That's one of the things I've got to do this afternoon is go to the post office, gonna go to Tilley Lane, come back to the post office, one of those things I've gotta get done. I'm gonna send that to them in the mail, because they're talking about Vermont-made. He said to me, "Well, how do those beers taste?" I thought, I haven't really had anything to do with alcohol for about 8, 9 years, but I remember when some of those beers first came out and they were pretty tasty. Its a whole different thing you know, it used to be Budweiser, you sit down and have 4 or 5 Budweisers. SOme of these beers are charging you so much per pint, so you'll sit there and sip on it more and get the whole flavor in your mouth versus swishing it down really fast. Its a whole different drinkability to it.

The other thing about it is most every place they've got the craft beers, they've got some good...whether it be a pizza or...there's something there to eat while you're having your beer. This is what it seems...I don't know.

**Do you have any other comments, broad picture, about making the city more livable in general?**

I think there's some good ideas. Burlington Telecoms got some problems...So does everything else, you know. There was something there that needed more entrepreneurs in the beginning at the ground floor rather than just the government helping it. Well dump all this money at it then wait a minute, where's all that money? Its one of those things that's crazy. I could pick on that. I'm not somebody who is advocating war or anything like that, but I think the F-35s coming in

here, they're talking about millions of millions of dollars coming into this area because of all those different flight crews come in with families, they're making good money, buying and renting places, having kids that are going to school, and they're really not quitting school, they're going through school which is a good thing. But they also have all the people...the gas stations, the restaurants, the box stores, all these things that they're spending their money in every week, every month, every year. It just kinda keeps growing the area. The F 35s should go...the couple minutes of noise...It doesn't happen right here but every once in a while you hear an airplane that will go over...It's not something that's gonna bother me. Especially if you buy a place or move to a place and you're somewhere close to the flight pattern, that's something you gotta live with. Just like when a truck goes down the road or there's other noise, you gotta live with it. But I think it's an oversight, the money that would come into this area...You have to look past the couple minutes of noise. There isn't dramatic pollution that comes from these planes, other than noise pollution. Am I saying that right? I just saw someone on the TV the other night, that's kinda crazy to be thinking that way. All the millions and millions of dollars.

And if we don't have those F 35s, the airports gonna lose all kinds of money from that, and if that airport stops growing, the one over in Plattsburgh's gonna keep growing. Because they've got a couple different entrepreneurs over in that airport in Plattsburgh that are bringing in businesses...and that airport is growing. I know a couple people that drove over to Plattsburgh, got on an airplane and flew down to Myrtle Beach. I think it was \$59 for the flight down, \$59 for the flight back. And Myrtle Beach, I don't know if you've been there, but that's a lot of fun. There's a lot of things to do right there in the whole area. A lot of people don't know, but Myrtle Beach is on an island, it's just an intercoastal island.

I lived in Oak Island...Myrtle Beach, it's in Horry County...It comes down and touches North Carolina. And North Carolina, where it touches, that's Brunswick County, and Brunswick County goes up and Cape [indistinguishable] comes down, goes through Wilmington North Carolina, comes down and goes into the ocean right there where Oak Island ends. Or stops or begins, whichever way you look at it. But it's beautiful down there.

Too many southern people that are fixin to get to that. Don't ask 'em when. Fixin to get to it could be anywhere from five minutes to five years. Don't pressure 'em.

And you talk to different people that are hiring people..They like hiring people from the north because they'll work. Even though it can get hot down there, but you find you put yourself at a different pace because of the heat and walking around, doing different things. But it's still, the area is nice.